

State Senator • Irma Clark-Coleman

Serving the 3rd District Constituents in Detroit, Dearborn & River Rouge

Senator Clark-Coleman Advocates for Detroit

Though only five months on the job, State Senator Irma Clark-Coleman has already gained a lifetime worth of experience advocating in the State Senate for the citizens of Detroit.



How to Contact Me

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Governor Vetoes Takeover of Detroit Water and Sewer

Governor Jennifer Granholm has vetoed legislation allowing for the takeover of Detroit Water & Sewer. Some critics of the utility had introduced legislation that would have taken management and control of Detroit Water & Sewer away from the city of Detroit. State Senator Clark-Coleman strongly opposed the takeover and had encouraged the Governor's veto.

Detroit Legislators fight Cuts to Detroit Public Library

The Senate Appropriations Committee recently removed nearly \$3 million from the Governor's budget proposal which had been earmarked for the Detroit Public Library. Senator Clark-Coleman, along with other members of the Detroit delegation, has been fighting to have those funds returned during the Conference Committee phase of the budget process.

Bill Provides for the Return of an Elected School Board

State Senator Clark-Coleman joined with other members of the Detroit delegation to help secure the passage of SB 157 which makes possible the return of an elected Detroit school board. The bill, co-sponsored by Senator Clark-Coleman, would allow for a referendum as soon as August, 2003. Community leaders in Detroit continue to debate the ideal time for the matter to come before voters. A 2003 special election date would allow the matter to be settled earlier but would cost an extra \$1.5 million, draw few voters, and might lead to unexpected consequences. A November, 2004 date would delay implementation but would garner a much higher turnout and guarantee an outcome more representative of the true wishes of the community. Senator Clark-Coleman has pledged to support whichever date gains the consensus support of the Detroit community.

A Note from Senator Irma Clark-Coleman



If you noticed a name change, it is due to Sen. Clark-Coleman's wonderful union to Reverend Ron D. Coleman, Sr., Pastor of God Land Unity Church.

Dear Constituent:

When I was elected to serve as your State Senator last November, I promised to work hard to make sure that all my constituents are well represented in Lansing.

I have been on the job five months now and I simply love the diversity of the 3rd Senate District! Encompassing parts of Detroit, Dearborn, and River Rouge, the 3rd District allows me to represent significant populations of Caucasians, Hispanics, Arabs, Chaldeans, African-Americans, and many others. Our district is the consummate melting pot. It is America in microcosm.

While the experience has been great, our economic times have been difficult. Due to declining tax revenues, overly optimistic revenue projections, excessive use of one-time revenues, and the continued phase-in of tax cuts, combined with a sagging economy, our state is facing a \$1.7 billion deficit. Hard decisions are going to have to be made in the upcoming weeks and months, but I am thankful that we have such a compassionate person as Governor Granholm to help guide us through these difficult times.

If you would like to reach me, contact information can be found on the front page of this newsletter. We have also put together a handy Senior Citizen Phone Guide (page 4) as a service to our district's many senior citizens. I would encourage all seniors to cut out the guide and keep it in a visible place, such as a refrigerator or bulletin board.

It is such a privilege to be your State Senator. The first few months have been fantastic and I look forward to an exciting and successful term.

*Irma Clark-Coleman
State Senator • 3rd District*

Legislative Update – June 2003

Regional Transportation Authority Promoted

Senate Bill 100 would create the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority, or DARTA, which would be charged with developing and implementing a comprehensive regional transportation service plan. Federal funds have already been offered to cover the initial start-up costs and, by adopting the legislation, Michigan would become eligible to receive additional money from a \$65 billion federal fund. "An improved and expanded transportation service would be good for our entire region," said Sen. Clark-Coleman.

Making Polluters Pay

State Senator Irma Clark-Coleman is co-sponsoring legislation which holds accountable the companies that discharge pollutants into our waterways. The legislation would

create a \$1,000 permit fee which would be used to finance enforcement and compliance measures. Michigan is currently one of only eight states nationwide that does not charge for these required permits. "Most citizens do not understand that it is currently the taxpayers, and not the polluters, who pick up the tab for the enforcement of state and federal environmental regulations," said Sen. Clark-Coleman. "We should send a strong message that polluters have a responsibility to help keep our waterways clean for Michigan citizens."

Sen. Clark-Coleman Seeks to Regulate Check Cashing Industry

Hard-working men and women in Michigan are being taken advantage of by check cashing and payday lending businesses that charge

outrageous fees. Senator Clark-Coleman has introduced Senate Bill 61 which would regulate businesses engaged in check cashing by requiring them to be licensed with the Office of Financial and Insurance Services and limit the fees that may be charged. The Senator is also co-sponsoring Senate Bill 21 which will regulate payday lenders by requiring that service fees not exceed the equivalent of a 25 percent annual interest rate. To give you some perspective, the average fee on a \$100 loan is \$15. If you annualize this fee, it would be the equivalent of paying 390 percent interest on your \$100 loan. "Many of these businesses prey upon people who are desperate and who don't understand the extent to which they are being taken advantage of," said Sen. Clark-Coleman. "Better regulation of these industries is needed to protect consumers from being exploited."

Granholm, Legislature Struggle with \$1.7 Billion Deficit



Just how potentially devastating is a \$1.7 billion deficit? As the Governor pointed out in her State of the State Address—"we could close every Secretary of State's office, shut down the Michigan State Police, lock up every State Park, cut out the entire Legislature, shut down the Attorney General's Office, and shut down the Departments of Agriculture, Military and Veterans Affairs,

Environmental Quality, and Natural Resources...and still not close the gap."

The Governor responded to the crisis by proposing a budget which eliminated the \$1.7 billion deficit without raising taxes. She did that while restoring the K-12 foundation grant in full. She also restored health care to 40,000 people who were cut off of Medicaid, and tripled

the number of seniors who will have prescription drug benefits.

The Governor's budget proposal is now in the hands of the State Legislature. The House and Senate have passed their own versions of several agency budgets and a final budget is expected to be negotiated in Conference Committee later this summer.

2003 Senior Update

Budget Proposal to Stabilize Medicaid Reimbursement Rates

Medicaid does you no good if there are no health care providers left who accept it. When states continue to cut provider reimbursement rates and benefits, doctors and hospitals stop accepting Medicaid. Governor Granholm's budget proposal would retain current funding for Michigan's hospitals, physicians, and other health care providers. At a time when many states are cutting eligibility for Medicaid, provider reimbursement rates, and benefits, Michigan is retaining FY 2003 provider rates.

Registration for "Do Not Call" List Begins This Summer

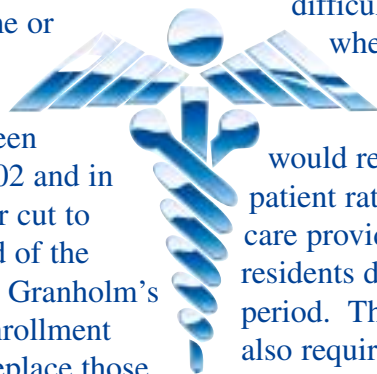
After a three-year struggle, a bill providing the public with protection from telemarketers was finally signed into law last December. Congress recently followed Michigan's lead with the adoption of its own "do-not-call" bill. This means that, beginning in July, consumers will be able to register, free of charge, to have their names added to a registry which will prevent most telemarketing phone calls. Sen. Clark-Coleman was the original sponsor of HB 4632 which, when signed into law last year, made violations of the home solicitation sales act an unfair practice under the Michigan Consumer Protection Act.

Governor's Plan Will Reduce Prescription Drug Prices

One of Governor Granholm's first acts was the creation of the Multi-State Medicaid Pharmaceutical Pooling Program. This innovative new program will combine the purchasing power of multiple states which will be pooled for the purposes of negotiating with pharmaceutical manufacturers in order to obtain greater discounts. Currently, Michigan is partnering with Vermont, South Carolina, and Wisconsin on this initiative. Other states may join as well.

MI Choice to Be Expanded

MI Choice (Home and Community Based Medical Waiver) allows eligible adults who meet income and asset criteria to receive Medicaid-covered services like those provided by nursing homes, but stay in their own home or another residential setting. Enrollment in the program had been closed since early 2002 and in December was further cut to 5,600 slots by the end of the fiscal year. Governor Granholm's budget will reopen enrollment into the program to replace those leaving the program on a one-to-one basis. This will increase the number of slots available to more than 8,000 in FY 2004.



EPIC Program Strengthened Under Budget Proposal

Governor Granholm is calling for an expansion of the Elder Prescription Insurance Coverage program. With the Pharmacy Plus Waiver currently awaiting approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Michigan will be able to expand its EPIC program to an additional 27,000 needy seniors and disabled individuals. The waiver will increase spending in the program from \$30 million to \$68 million. Currently, the EPIC program serves fewer than 15,000 individuals. With the waiver, EPIC will be available to more than 42,000.

Bill Offers Better Staffing for Nursing Homes

Every day, Michigan families face difficult decisions about whether to move a loved one into a nursing home. Senate Bill 140 would require that the staff-to-patient ratio not fall below one care provider to 15 nursing home residents during any 24-hour period. This legislation would also require that there be at least one registered professional nurse or licensed practical nurse on duty at all times.



State Senator
Irma Clark-Coleman

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About Senator Clark-Coleman...

Irma Clark-Coleman was born in a small town in rural Georgia. Her father moved her family to Michigan in hopes of a better future. Irma was the first in her family to graduate from college. While working full time and raising a family, she earned a Bachelor's degree from Wayne State University in 1977. She followed that up with a Master's degree four years later.

She worked for the Wayne County Road Commission, where she retired as Director of Human Relations in 1998, after 31 years of public service. She was one of the first African-American women to hold a management position for the Wayne County Road Commission.

Irma Clark-Coleman is a former Detroit School Board member, where she served as President for

three years. She also served in the House of Representatives in 1998 and continued to the State Senate in 2002. She serves on the Senate Education Committee, Senior Citizens and Veteran Affairs Committee, and the Banking and Financial Institutions Committee.

She has been married nearly five years to Rev. Ron D. Coleman, Sr. She has two college-educated children and two grandchildren.



Sen. Clark-Coleman joined by her family at her swearing in ceremony. From left: Anthony Parker, son, and wife Katherine; Melanie Moss, daughter; and Rev. Ron D. Coleman, Sr., husband.



Sen. Clark-Coleman is sworn in as State Senator by Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan in January.

Senior Citizen Phone Guide

Please Cut Out and Keep Somewhere Visible

Health/Prescription Drug Assistance

Detroit Area Agency on Aging313-446-4444
Empowering Zone Seniors (AWBS)....313-833-3766

Referral Agencies

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program....517-373-8230
Foster Grandparent Program.....517-373-8230
Senior Companion Program517-373-8230
American Parkinson's Disease Assoc. ..800-223-2732
Dental for Seniors800-589-2632
Medicare Appeals800-365-5899
Nursing Home/Long-Term Care800-292-7852
Social Security.....800-772-1213

Transportation

EZ Ride (AWBS).....313-521-1900
Senior Citizen's Area Transit.....313-521-1900

Employment

MI Office of Services to the Aging.....517-373-8230
The Mature Worker's Program313-222-5300

Housing

MSHDA.....517-335-2006
Senior Home Repair Program.....313-224-3461